



Meeting Minutes

**DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2015 – NOON
DART Central Station, Multimodal Room
620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, Iowa**

TRAC Members Present:

Randy Anderson, Jay Peterson, Dina Ricketts, Tonia Crawford, Pam Goehring, Richard Sadler, Mark Hutchens, Randy Henriksen, Michele Meadors arrived late

TRAC Members Absent:

Brenda Gill, Denise Jones, Mary Walter, Michael Barber

TRAC Staff Present:

Barbara Finch, Jim Tishim, Jamie Schug, Jennifer Long, Ellye Kovner, Madi Linkenmeyer, Anna Johnson, Luke Lester, Tony Lafata

Others Present:

None

A. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jay Peterson at 12:05.

Roll call was taken and was short 1 person for quorum. Michele Meadors arrived at 12:35. Then there was quorum.

Notice of the meeting was duly posted.

B. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 14, 2015 MINUTES

The Chair called for corrections to the January 14, 2014 meeting minutes.

Dina Ricketts motioned and Michelle Meadors seconded. Voted and hearing none, the minutes from the meeting were approved.

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Technology Update – Luke Lester, Systems Administrator

Luke Lester spoke about the new text messaging services, the mobile app and the IVR.

Text Messaging: Text 64274 and enter dart and stop number. This is a service for people at the bus stops wanting to know when the next bus will be arriving. If you want to see only one route, you can put a space and the route number. This will let you see just one bus route information. Luke did an example on his phone and showed the room the results. If you wanted information on the D-Line, it must be entered exactly D-Line. No questions were asked.

Mobile App: We have a new app called Ontime Transit and it is available in the app store on smart phones. It will be similar to the text message, and you can search for specific stops and routes. The app displays real time information on where the vehicles are at. Questions? Jay Peterson asked how long the new app has been out. Luke answered, about a month, but our IT department is continually updating the apps, as most apps are continually updating. Pam Goehring asked if we could track how many people downloaded the app. Luke answered, yes, but he doesn't have that information in front of him at this moment. Jay Peterson asked will the app save specific stops. Luke answered, yes, customers can bookmark specific stops and routes. It will also use your GPS locations for stops, if you have that option enabled on your phone. Jay Peterson asked if it was distinguishable as a DART product. Luke answered no, because it is used by multiple transit agencies. It will ask your location, or use GPS to distinguish your location, but not DART related. Richard Sadler asked if there is a place you can link it to DART when searching for the app. Luke answered no, but we can talk to our partner about this possibility.

AVR: Automated Voice Response. When calling the DART phone number, it is option #1 on the phone for schedule information. Luke dialed the number to demonstrate. If you know your stop information, you enter it and it will give you updated information.

2. Marketing Promotions – Madi Linkenmeyer, Marketing Coordinator

Jim introduced Madi as the new Marketing Coordinator. Madi had a power point presentation that went over things happening in the marketing department. She recapped the technology portion. Madi talked about the RideShare spring campaign that included a 2 month, 25% off special and also a referral incentive program. Madi talked about the Stand Up 4 Transportation open street event that will be happening April 9th, 2014 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and encouraged everyone to attend and support the cause. The event is geared towards the discussion on a long term funding bill and people are getting together to push the bill through Congress. There were no questions, but Jim Tishim also encouraged everyone to come out and support the cause.

3. Windsor Heights Transit Station – Jim Tishim, Planning Director

Jim Tishim gave a presentation. Jim said that the Windsor Heights stop is one of the largest boarding sites we have, so we need a better facility. He showed pictures of the current bus stop and talked about how it is on an island with rocks and not very ideal to navigate, and that it wasn't a very large area. There are no sidewalks, crosswalks or order to the area. The stop is also right next to the refueling station for the gas station and customers shouldn't be smoking, but they do. Jim asked how many people had been to the bus stop and there were 7 hands raised. Jim went through the improvements and said they were trying to make it cost effective. A new bus stop will be located in a current parking lot that isn't used and will have better and safer boarding and walking paths. He showed a map of the design. He talked how it was going to be funded mostly by an ICAAP grant, which was approved for FY15. Questions? Randy Henriksen mentioned that he used to work at Walmart and mentioned that the proposed site was quite a distance. Jim Tishim explained that DART looked at all options and closer options would cause issues of safety. He mentioned that this project took 2 years of planning and this option was the best opportunity. Dina Ricketts asked if there were going to be someone to plow snow. Jim Tishim said that Walmart and the City would be responsible for the snow removal. Jim said they would be looking into that in the lease agreement. Richard Henriksen asked about the infrastructure of the parking lot and if it would withstand the weight of the buses. Jim said they have looked that and it is in the plan, but should hold up for 15 to 20 years.

4. FY 2016 Budget Update – Jamie Schug, Chief Financial Officer

Jamie talked about the FY16 budget approval process to levy taxes. Once a year our budget is presented to the Commission for approval and then is filed with the state and the county for approval so that DART is able to levy taxes. This budget covers all functions of DART, including Fixed Route, Paratransit and Rideshare. We are not proposing to add any service increases. We are looking into things to do an update this fall. Revenues were stagnant and did not show that we needed to ask for an increase. Commission approved a 6 ½% property tax levy increase. Jamie showed a graph that showed how the increase will be used. She talked about the climbing Health Insurance rates and we are expecting a 30% increase. 19% would go toward normal salary increases. IT to work on new technology was 22%. Local Match reflects shifted funding to replace capital was 5%. ATU for existing staff and pay increases and also the affordable care act health insurance for part time people 14% and 21%. In the process of preparing a 20 year financial model to go over with the commission and all stake holders to talk about where DART sees itself in the future, what funding looks like and where to go from here. Questions? Mark Hutchens asked what the total amount for the levy is. Jamie said it depends on which community you live in. They were all calculated from a formula that was adopted.

D. ACTION ITEMS

1. 2015 TRAC Goals

Jim talked about the updated goals. He stated that since the last meeting that one of the goals had been voted on and approved by the commission, so we took it off and added Goal 6 which is Capital Improvements through operations. Tony Lafata talked about the Capital Improvement plan which lays out things that we have not been improving in a timely manner. This goal covers a means and a schedule to make those improvements going forward. It includes improvements and upgrades to the buildings at Dart Way and rolling stock or buses that need updated. (Plan is laid out for 10 years to determine which items to pursue and what order.) Questions? Michelle Meadors asked if the replacement of 3 medium paratransit are being replaced by the truck like buses. Tony said yes, along with 6 articulated buses and 3 others. Michelle said that she viewed the new buses as very problematic for the people who ride them. And she asked if there was a questionnaire or options to see how the buses would serve people in wheelchairs. Tony stated that we do not and go by equipment recommendations of paratransit fleets across the country. He said that the vehicles are on a 5 year plan and change-over is costly. They are light duty in nature, but perform heavy tasks. And with the quantities of wheelchairs and equipment, these buses are designed to stand up better and also more wheelchair positions than the previous buses, meaning they can carry more people. Michelle was concerned that the buses ride more like a truck and can cause people get sick and said there was an additional step. Tony said the step inside is eliminated, which people fall regularly, She was really disappointed that there was no study for paratransit people to test them out, and now DART has committed . Tony and Michelle agreed to meet and discuss other problems she was concerned about. Jay motioned to approve the new goals. Randy moved and Dina 2nd. Voted and hearing none, the new goals were approved.

E. OTHER BUSINESS

1. TRAC ID's

Jim Tishim said if anyone did not have a TRAC ID to go down to customer service and they will set them up with one. These ID's will allow them to ride the buses for free.

F. TRAC MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

None

G. STAFF UPDATES

1. DART Rodeo – Tony Lafata, Chief Operating Officer

Tony Lafata said that the Rodeo is an annual skills competition over an obstacle course held at Southridge Mall. Many agencies across the country participate. DART's is May 30th and we are asking for volunteers to be judges. Winners of our Rodeo can go to the State Rodeo. DART is also hosting the State Rodeo on June 13th and we can use volunteer judges for that as well. Winners of the State Rodeo go to the National Rodeo at APTA in Ohio.

H. PUBLIC ITEMS

No Public was present

I. FUTURE AGENDA

None

J. UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. DART Commission – Noon Tuesday, April 7, 2015. DART Central Station
2. TRAC – Noon Wednesday, May 13, 2015, DART Central Station

K. ADJOURN

Michelle Meadors motioned, Dina Ricketts seconded. Voted and hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 pm.